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Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

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Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventh session

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), in which the Peacebuilding Commission was requested to submit an annual report to the Assembly for an annual debate and review. The report will also be submitted to the Council, pursuant to its resolution 1646 (2005), for an annual debate. The report covers the seventh session of the Commission, held from 1 January to 31 December 2013.

2. On 29 October 2010, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted resolutions 65/7 and 1947 (2010), respectively, through which the two organs, inter alia, requested the Commission to reflect, in its annual reports, the progress made in taking forward the relevant recommendations contained in the 2010 report of the co-facilitators on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (A/64/868-S/2010/393, annex).

3. In the present report, the Commission has maintained the format for reporting on progress in taking forward the recommendations of the 2010 review, which it introduced for the first time in the report on its sixth session (A/67/715-S/2013/63). The report is organized around the main functions of the Commission, as well as efforts made in implementing the agenda going forward adopted in its previous report. Particular emphasis has been placed on results achieved, as well as challenges and opportunities noted through its engagement in countries on its agenda. The present report aims to draw analyses from relevant country-specific examples.

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II. Work of the Commission

A. Overview of issues from the 2013 agenda going forward

4. In pursuing its agenda going forward for 2013,[1] as the implementation and monitoring framework for taking forward relevant recommendations emanating from the 2010 review, and in addition to engaging in actions pertaining in this connection to its core functions of advocacy and sustained attention, resource mobilization and forging coherence, the Commission has vigorously addressed the role of its membership, as well as its links with the principal United Nations organs. It has also dedicated attention to documenting its working methods and to reflecting on areas therein requiring deeper policy reflection (see sect. II.E below). To this end, the Organizational Committee, with support from the Working Group on Lessons Learned, initiated a series of informal discussions aimed at generating shared understanding within the membership on areas requiring immediate actions, outreach and practical implementation. In addition, an emerging partnership between the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation is aimed at supporting the Commission's consideration of a number of policy-related work streams. In October, a workshop organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation brought together Member States, the Deputy Secretary-General, senior officials from the United Nations lead entities and external experts and practitioners. The findings emerging from this workshop were shared and discussed with the Organizational Committee in November and are reflected in several sections of the present report.

Role of the membership

5. The Commission has prioritized consideration of the role of its membership, especially in view of its unique compositional structure. It was agreed that this is an area of strength upon which the Commission has yet to fully capitalize in order to maximize its results and impact, both in the field and at Headquarters. In this regard and starting as early as February with a workshop organized by the International Peace Institute and the Quaker United Nations Office for new delegates on the Organizational Committee, the discussions highlighted the need to tap into the assets of the membership in such areas as comparative learning among Member States that have undergone successful peacebuilding experiences, provision of technical expertise in country-specific peacebuilding priority areas, and coherence of policies and programmes through the flow of information to and coordination among capitals, resident embassies and permanent missions in New York. In this regard, there is a need to further explore ways to help enhance the sense of collective responsibility for the objectives of the Commission and the countries in its agenda, especially in the field.

6. The Commission needs to be oriented towards and focused on encouraging deeper engagement of the membership through various channels and means at the disposal of Member States. To this end, the Commission should continue to encourage Member States, especially those from the region, to take up voluntary tasks in support of identified peacebuilding priorities.

[1] As contained in the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its sixth session (A/67/715-S/2013/63), paras. 51 to 56.

Links with the United Nations principal organs

7. The Commission has recognized the complementarity of the work streams on the role of the membership and the relations with United Nations principal organs. Progress in enhancing ownership and collective responsibility among its members should be first and foremost manifested in championing concrete and practical steps to strengthen the links with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. To this end, a number of discussions among members elected or selected by the three principal organs were held between April and November.

8. The second informal interactive dialogue of 26 April between members of the Security Council, the Chairs Group and the countries on the agenda scoped and defined the space in which the Council and the Commission should be able to develop their partnership, also based, as appropriate, on findings identified by the Working Group on lessons learned at its previous meetings and on other occasions. It reaffirmed, in this respect, the important role expected from the Commission in, inter alia, identifying potential risks to and gaps in the peacebuilding processes in agenda countries; monitoring the level of attention and commitment from national, regional and international actors; promoting coherence among and alignment of United Nations and non-United Nations policies, activities and objectives; and supporting successful transition of United Nations missions in agenda countries. In taking forward these ideas, the Organizational Committee designated Rwanda as coordinator of a process aimed at engaging the joint membership of the Council and the Commission in informally monitoring and taking stock of progress and challenges in managing the interactions between both bodies. The stocktaking has focused on specific situations that came up for the Council's consideration between July and September, namely, in Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the Commission was invited to exercise its advisory role. The members concluded that the modality of interactions between both bodies should remain flexible, informal and mutually proactive, and that it should be managed at the ambassadorial and expert levels. The stocktaking has further underscored the usefulness of the informal interaction which helps the Commission to convey ideas that are subsequently reflected in Council resolutions. In addition, improved "intra-mission" coordination, especially between experts on both bodies, may help to further ensure that the outcome of informal interactions is reflected in the Council's actions. The evolving practice and principles, as well as lessons learned derived from the interaction in July and September, will continue to guide the further strengthening of the links between the two organs. In this connection, periodic and situation-specific stocktaking will continue in order to identify additional areas of good practice and to help address areas requiring further improvement.

9. The integration and coherence of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts remain crucial for achieving durable peace and security and for the prevention of relapse. In its resolution 2086 (2013), the Security Council highlighted and reaffirmed this important interlinkage in the context of multidimensional peacekeeping missions, and expressed the Council's continued willingness to make use of the advisory, advocacy and resource mobilization roles of the Commission in peacebuilding activities, welcomed the progress it had achieved, and emphasized the need for further harnessing these roles in advancing and supporting an integrated and coherent approach with respect to multidimensional peacekeeping mandates in countries in its agenda.

10. The joint membership of the General Assembly and the Commission recognize the need for strengthening the links between both bodies. To this end, the Organizational Committee designated South Africa as coordinator of a process aimed at exploring options for more informal and substantive links between the two organs. In this regard, the coordinator has initiated consultations with the President of the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly in order to identify possible entry points through which the Commission could tap into the Assembly's convening power and broad-based membership in order to raise awareness of and to advocate for the specific peacebuilding needs and opportunities in the countries on the agenda.

11. Similarly, the joint membership of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission acknowledged that the collaboration between the two bodies needed a fresh look, with a view to enhancing complementarities, as well as streamlining and drawing broader attention to the socioeconomic dimension of peacebuilding. In this regard, the importance of sufficient preparations to ensure quality outcomes of and follow-up to interactions between the Commission and both organs remains a crucial factor in justifying the investment of time and resources in the organization of additional meetings and events.

B. Advocacy, accompaniment and sustaining attention

12. A clear national vision and commitment, of which advocacy and accompaniment by the Commission can be supportive, are essential. While this reflects the continuing evolution and potential of the Commission's role in advocacy, accompaniment and sustaining attention in some of the countries on the agenda, the political and security developments in other countries on the agenda have raised questions about the limitations of the Commission in this area. The Commission positioned itself to support the transition of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) and initiated a process to consider its own transition in Sierra Leone. It also continued to accompany Burundi in the follow-up to the 2012 Geneva Partners Conference and Liberia in the design and initiation of the national reconciliation process. The Commission also supported efforts led by the United Nations and the region in support of legislative elections in Guinea. At the same time, the Commission, in its engagement in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, continued to face the challenges accompanying derailed peacebuilding processes following unconstitutional changes of government. In this connection and when some type of relapse has occurred, the situations in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic have, yet again, underlined the limitations of the Commission's advocacy and accompaniment functions and the need to reflect further on the nature, scope and timing of the exercise of its role in eliciting and sustaining the attention of the international community.

13. At an advanced stage in the peacebuilding processes in Sierra Leone and Burundi, the Commission's role in the area of advocacy and accompaniment is closely linked to its functions of mobilizing resources and forging coherence. In Sierra Leone, the adoption of the Agenda for Prosperity[2] and the initiation of the transition and drawdown of UNIPSIL represented key milestones for refocusing the Commission's engagement and functions and adapting them to the specific needs

[2] http://www.sierra-leone.org/Agenda%204%20Prosperity.pdf.

and developments on the ground. In this regard, the Commission's engagement was characterized, in particular, by regular dialogue at headquarters and in the field with the Government, the Security Council, senior United Nations leadership and key country partners. During this dialogue, the Commission echoed the point of view of the United Nations and the Government, namely, that in transitioning to a development-oriented assistance, it is important that the international community remain engaged in respect of peacebuilding needs in Sierra Leone. In Burundi and following the success of the Geneva Partners Conference in 2012, the Commission's advocacy role proceeded in two parallel directions. Through follow-up activities to the Geneva Conference in New York and in Bujumbura, the Commission has promoted an approach of mutual accountability, encouraging the Government to honour its commitments in political and economic reforms, while also encouraging donors to translate their pledges into concrete commitments and programmes. The Commission has also contributed to raising awareness of partners and to increasing visibility of good practices and achievements in Burundi in areas such as domestic revenue collection and human rights. Furthermore, the Commission engaged in high-level advocacy initiatives and in support of the political dialogue and other preparatory processes for the 2015 elections. The Commission will use the agreed annual progress monitoring mechanism to sustain the attention and engagement of the Government and its partners regarding pledged commitments and agreed reforms, and to advise Burundi on the key political processes in 2014 that will lay the foundation for successful elections in 2015.

14. The advocacy and accompaniment function assumed an issue-specific focus during the reporting period in Liberia and Guinea. With emphasis placed on generating political momentum behind the national reconciliation process in Liberia, the Government launch of the Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation in July and the National Palava Hut Programme in October represented important steps forward in the direction of a coherent reconciliation strategy in the country. In this context, the Commission is engaged with the Government and its partners in helping to address technical and budgetary impediments to the process and encouraging the Government to take necessary measures to affirm its commitment to this nationally identified peacebuilding priority. On the other hand, in Guinea, the electoral process drew forth its own particular focus from the Commission. In this regard, the Commission framed its advocacy and accompaniment role in support of the efforts led by the facilitation team and Said Djinnit, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, and acted as the voice of the international community from New York during critical moments of the electoral process. This engagement was manifested through the issuing of official statements and the convening of meetings which offered Mr. Djinnit a platform for briefing and interacting with the members of the Commission.

15. Also in Liberia, the Commission was represented by the Chair in the security sector reform workshop organized by the Governments of Liberia and Sweden and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in September. The Commission contributed to an emerging and broad recognition of the need for the national security institutions to keep up with the pace of transition of UNMIL, and of the need for stronger linkages between the justice and security actors, as well as stronger linkages of those actors with the legislature.

C. Resource mobilization and partnerships

16. The Commission has continued to prioritize its activities related to its resource mobilization function, with its role increasingly focused on supporting national efforts to mobilize resources. As noted by experts and several members during the workshop organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Peacebuilding Support Office in October, the advantage of the Commission in the area of resource mobilization does not lie in fundraising, but rather in broadening the base and securing the buy-in of traditional and new bilateral and multilateral donors to engagement in support of the peacebuilding processes in the countries concerned. The other advantage demonstrated by the process in Burundi is the opportunity offered by resource mobilization forums to promote and further advance the political and economic reform agenda in the country. In this respect, there is increasing recognition that the Commission's activities in marshalling resources, in advocacy and sustaining attention, and in forging coherence are mutually reinforcing and must be pursued with an overarching and strategic approach. In this connection and at the October follow-up conference in Burundi, the Government announced that the delivery rate is estimated at a satisfactory 52 per cent of the $2.5 billion pledged in Geneva.

17. The Commission's prioritization of partnership with international financial institutions and regional development banks continues to be at the core of the multidimensional approach to this function. The partnership is increasingly manifested in country-specific contexts and in connection with most recently adopted development strategies in Burundi, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. At the same time, there is need for stocktaking of progress made in taking forward the partnership with the World Bank and the African Development Bank at the country level based on a process of cross-learning within the Commission. In the case of Sierra Leone, further discussions were undertaken with the relevant resident international financial institutions and donor community in the country during the peacebuilding assessment mission in November. The Commission's engagement during the reporting period in the follow-up to the Geneva Partners Conference for Burundi focused primarily on supporting the Government effort to sustain policy dialogue with its partners around specific sectors of the second poverty reduction strategy paper. In this regard, the coordination with the World Bank has been further intensified, in particular in connection with the support provided to the Government of Burundi in organizing two follow-up conferences in Bujumbura in June and October.

18. The Commission's emphasis on and support for the Government's lead on resource mobilization efforts were further manifested in the engagement with Liberia, especially in support of the justice and security priority area. In this regard and in connection with a pledging conference planned for the first quarter of 2014, the Commission efforts will be increasingly aligned to the Government resource mobilization strategy, which is linked to the implementation of the Agenda for Transformation,[3] and other relevant national frameworks. Similarly and following the launch of the Agenda for Prosperity by the Government of Sierra Leone in July, the Commission advocated with key partners for the need to consider the document as an overarching strategy, which should guide all future international assistance to

[3] See http://mof.gov.lr/doc/AfT%20document-%20April%2015,%202013.pdf.

national development efforts. A clear national resource mobilization strategy centred around the Agenda for Prosperity will enable the Commission to revisit its own future engagement in Sierra Leone, with a view to effectively promoting targeted and more coherent support for the peacebuilding-related priorities of the Agenda.

19. The Commission has also used its platform to advocate for the use of timely resources in a coordinated fashion in countries approaching or facing crises. In the Central African Republic, for example, a configuration meeting held in September allowed for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Peacebuilding Fund and the European Union to agree in principle on a coordinated approach to supporting the civilian police and gendarmerie. Towards the end of the year, the Commission welcomed the use of $5 million from the Fund's Immediate Response Facility to build momentum for the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to assist Guinea-Bissau in sustaining the process leading to its return to constitutional order.

20. The reporting period has also witnessed intensified policy-related efforts to explore practical entry points with the private sector and philanthropic organizations. To this end, a special event of the Commission was held in June in collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact Office. Bringing together business leaders from Africa, civil society and Governments, the event focused on the role of the private sector as catalyst for economic growth and job creation in post-conflict countries, and underscored the importance of creating an enabling environment for the effective development of the local private sector and of fostering socially responsible business practices, and inclusive economic growth. Going forward, it is important for the Commission to explore practical steps aimed at clarifying the nature and scope of a desired partnership with the private sector. For example, the Commission can support national Governments of countries in its agenda in identifying practical solutions to challenges inhibiting investment flows and advocate with partners on the need for a greater focus on national private sector development.

21. Entry points for partnership with foundations and philanthropic organizations have proved to be even more challenging for the Commission. Through initial and exploratory contacts initiated by the Peacebuilding Support Office, a number of opportunities and challenges were identified. In particular, it was noted that while foundations make large contributions to a variety of initiatives in post-conflict countries, the funding focus is usually contextualized within themes such as poverty alleviation, support to human security and promotion of social welfare. Foundations find "peacebuilding" to be a vague concept with security-oriented connotations. In order to address this challenge, the Commission can further explore options for outreach, including through the provision of evidence-based analysis, as appropriate, on the long-term impact on sustainable peace of an integrated approach to specific areas related to peacebuilding.

22. In addition to the emerging trends in country-specific approaches to resource mobilization, there has been a continuing development by the Commission of an institutional approach to this function based on lessons learned and good practice. In addition to considering, in 2012, the Commission's possible role in promoting the development of national aid coordination and management systems in countries in its agenda, the Working Group on Lessons Learned continued to highlight practical approaches for the Commission in exercising its resource mobilization function. The

Working Group workplan for the reporting period was developed with the objectives of drawing lessons learned and generating findings related to the role of the Commission in supporting the organization of donor/partner conferences (April); and of exploring and underscoring different approaches to building national capacities for domestic revenue generation (July).

23. Drawing upon the experience of Burundi, the Working Group discussion on national capacities for domestic revenue generation underscored that this can make a significant contribution in supporting nationally led funding for recovery and peacebuilding priority areas, as well as constitute an important aspect of reform that can catalyse and encourage external financial support. The successful performance of the national office on revenue of Burundi testified to the national commitment to improve domestic revenue generation, which was underscored by the Commission and the Government at the Geneva Conference. Such commitment has proved to be helpful in sustaining the engagement of donors, as evidenced by the outcome of the Conference. The Commission will promote experience-sharing between Burundi and other agenda countries in this crucial dimension of a possible national resource mobilization strategy.

D. Forging coherence

24. Addressing the challenge of competing agendas and fragmentation of peacebuilding activities remains a central objective of the Commission. However, and as noted by experts and several members at the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation informal workshop held in October, the Commission is not positioned to coordinate operational activities in the field. On the other hand, the Commission can forge coherence in peacebuilding-related engagements in countries in its agenda by promoting a greater focus on opportunities for peacebuilding, by pointing to strategic gaps in response to peacebuilding priorities and by drawing the attention of key stakeholders to bottlenecks in the peacebuilding processes. At the same time, the need for greater consistency and coherence of decisions made by its Member States regarding peacebuilding-related areas of bilateral assistance, as well as in connection with positions and actions taken in relevant multilateral forums, cannot be overemphasized.

25. In Burundi, the Commission drew upon the follow-up meeting to the Geneva Conference in October to encourage and facilitate coordinated and consistent messages from key partners on key issues of a political and technical nature. Encouraged by the Commission, the final communiqué issued at the conclusion of the meeting in Bujumbura on 30 October consolidated the commitments of the Government around key political issues and the commitments of the main donors in support of the second poverty reduction strategy paper, thus ensuring greater clarity of expectations and commitments on both sides. Similarly in Liberia, the Commission advocated for greater coordination between the main bilateral and institutional partners of the country on national peacebuilding priorities, including through the convening of a round table in Monrovia in September on land and natural resources management. Further underscoring a critical requirement for more effective and coherent international assistance in this area, for which the Commission's advocacy will be required, participants at the round table underlined the need for dialogue involving local communities, the private sector, civil society and the Government.

26. In collaboration with the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Commission intensified its efforts to increase coherence at the country level through its partnership with the Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund aligned their country visits to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi in order to increase strategic cooperation and strengthen the synergy of their respective and complementary roles. Working closely with the Fund provides another way for the Commission to build up the political and programmatic momentum behind commonly agreed priorities. In this regard, in Liberia, the Fund grant of $15 million in September is centred on the Government Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation, a policy that has been strongly advocated by the Commission (and for which the Commission advised the Fund to wait before allocating resources in 2011). The Commission will continue working with the World Bank and the Peacebuilding Fund in the context of the new Peacebuilding Priority Plan approved by the Fund in October. In Burundi and as a follow-up to the Geneva Partners Conference, a third Peacebuilding Fund allocation, of approximately $10 million, is envisaged around areas relevant to the consolidation of democracy in the run-up to the 2015 elections, such as social cohesion and national dialogue, youth participation in political and social initiatives, human rights and resolution of land disputes. The Commission underlined its support for the planned third allocation of the Fund, highlighting the necessity of linking it to a strong conflict analysis. In Guinea, the configuration was used as a platform through which to advocate for a coherent and urgent international response to tension-filled legislative elections, at which the Fund made a public statement of support in the presence of Mr. Djinnit. In Liberia, the Commission has strongly encouraged the Fund to realign the Joint Steering Committee, especially given the Government adoption of the new Agenda for Transformation. By these actions, the Commission and the Fund are aligning their voices behind the vision of the Government. For its next allocation to Burundi, the Fund is also realigning itself behind the country's second poverty reduction strategy paper.

27. At the policy level, the complementarity between the Commission and the United Nations senior leadership has been recognized as a key aspect of enhancing coherence and maximizing the impact of activities and actions undertaken in support of peacebuilding in the field. In this connection and in addition to regular meetings of the Commission with the Executive and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in agenda countries, the second informal interaction between the Chair of the Commission, the Chairs of the country configurations and the Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned with some of these representatives was held through videoconferencing in March. Informal interaction in 2013 further reflected on the nature of the partnership between the Commission and the United Nations senior leadership in the field; and on opportunities for strengthening this partnership through the attainment of greater clarity regarding areas of the Commission's added value for the United Nations. While encouraging developments were witnessed during the reporting period, there is a need for sustained dialogue and active channels of communications between the Commission and the United Nations senior leadership, including through joint support from the Peacebuilding Support Office and the lead United Nations entity at Headquarters. There is also a need for cross-learning among the configurations regarding working models, which have developed recently, for collaboration and complementarity between the Commission and United Nations senior leadership in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau.

E. Working methods

28. In pursuing its agenda going forward for 2013, as the implementation and monitoring framework for taking forward relevant recommendations from the 2010 review, the Commission has devoted attention to reviewing and reflecting on its working methods. The work in this area reflected the Commission's continued preoccupation with areas requiring significant improvements in order to facilitate engagement and ownership of the Commission objectives by Member States, and countries on its agenda, as well as United Nations system and institutional partners. In this regard, the Organizational Committee initiated a process aimed at documenting established working methods in performing country-specific work and at identifying ways for streamlining and enhancing the predictability of the Commission's work programme, as well as its overall policy orientation and its result-oriented actions. To this end, a series of working-level informal consultations were convened between February and November resulting in:

(a) A compendium covering aspects related to the Commission's country-specific engagement, cross-learning within configurations and communications.[4] While it is considered a living document and a useful reference for delegates and external partners, as well as Chairs of country configurations, the compendium should be regularly reviewed on the basis of lessons learned and emerging developments in the Commission approach to its core functions, forms of engagement and envisaged institutional adjustments;

(b) An agreement by the Organizational Committee on 3 December to convene an annual session of the Commission to enable closer interaction and engagement among the relevant stakeholders in New York, and on the ground, as well as from the capitals of Member States. The agreement was reached under the coordination of Indonesia. The holding of the annual session will help streamline the Commission working methods and further strengthen the relevance and coherence of the work of the Commission. The first session will be convened in June 2014.

29. Several actions introduced under the "working methods" cluster of the 2013 agenda going forward required in-depth discussions and were organized around four interlinked policy work streams, related to those of the Commission, namely, field orientation, results and impact, forms of engagement, and transition and exit. These topics reflect key areas of recommendations from the 2010 review and are considered central to the future orientation of the Commission. The Commission initiated informal discussions on all four work streams during the reporting period. It was also acknowledged that further discussions are required in this regard.

30. Norway led the initial discussions in April and July on the "field orientation" work stream. A key finding of the discussions was the need for the Commission to promote improvement in policy coherence within its membership. Some participants suggested that the resident embassies of the Member States of the Commission have a particular role to play in strengthening the link between the field and New York. In Burundi, the Commission has reached out to the diplomatic community during its field visits to Bujumbura through individual and multi-stakeholder discussions. In

[4] See http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/oc/PBC%20Working%20Methods%20Compendium_Part%20I_Formatted_30April2013.pdf.

addition to facilitating smooth working relations with the United Nations senior leadership in the field, these discussions have proved useful in improving communications and the exchange of perspectives from the field and New York for the benefit of a more field-oriented engagement of the Commission that responds to field-based analyses of the critical needs, priorities and challenges of the peacebuilding process in Burundi.

31. The workshop organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in October addressed the work streams on the Commission's "results and impact" and "forms of engagement". Initial findings from the workshop confirmed that the Commission has proved that it has an added value when exercising its three main functions — advocacy, resource mobilization and forging coherence — in a manner that is commensurate with its role as a New York-based political and strategic advisory body. Participants at the workshop stressed that the Commission, in order to mainstream a strategic approach to performing its functions, should ensure that lessons learned on good practice are shared across configurations. Some participants underlined the need for the Commission to explore lighter and more flexible forms of engagement that will enable it to better exercise its convener's role and to tap into the knowledge and the political leverage of its membership.

32. The Commission will approach the work stream on "transition and exit" by learning from the ongoing transition planning in Sierra Leone. Guided by Security Council resolution 2097 (2013), the planning process encompasses the findings of the peacebuilding assessment mission to Sierra Leone that took place in November, as well as subsequent consultations with the Government and key stakeholders in early 2014. The parameters of the transition process of the Commission will be clearly defined following a review of the progress made in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, as well as in areas for which Commission support would be needed during the transition period.

F. Peacebuilding thematic issues

33. Recognizing the important contribution of women to peacebuilding, the Commission was originally mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council to integrate a gender dimension throughout its work. In this connection, the Commission approached its thematic focus on economic revitalization and national reconciliation during the reporting period by examining the gender dimension of both themes. A partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has enabled the Commission to explore, raise awareness of and draw lessons from the transformative role of women in post-conflict societies.

Economic revitalization

34. In September, a high-level event on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding was convened in partnership with UN-Women, which was chaired by Vesna Pusić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia. The event was characterized by a wide attendance of high-level participants who used the opportunity to highlight the contribution of women's economic empowerment to the effectiveness of post-conflict economic activities and economic growth, and to improving the quality and social outcomes of economic

recovery measures and policies. A political declaration was adopted by the Commission (PBC/7/OC/3), which affirmed the commitment of the Commission members to women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding. Through its country-specific engagement and the exercise of its three main functions, the Commission would continue to promote the economic empowerment of women and their equal engagement alongside men in post-conflict recovery.

35. The event was organized in collaboration with UN-Women and, in this regard, became an opportunity to highlight its recent study that raised key concerns for policymakers in terms of the legal, asset, financial and skills constraints that impede women's engagement in economic recovery and undermine their contributions to peacebuilding, as well as the links between women's contribution to economic recovery and their access to security and justice.

National reconciliation

36. Gender-responsive national reconciliation processes represent a crucial dimension of women's contributions to peace. In December, the Working Group on Lessons Learned addressed women's contribution to national reconciliation with the objectives of facilitating dialogue among national and international peacebuilding actors on challenges and opportunities for enhancing gender-responsive national reconciliation processes, of sharing lessons learned and good practices from national experiences, and of making recommendations grounded in national experiences to inform the development of a gender policy for the Commission.

37. The meeting reaffirmed the importance of gender mainstreaming throughout national reconciliation processes in planning, priority setting, design and delivery. While there are pertinent common lessons across contexts, as recognized by some participants, it was underlined that the approaches should be differentiated and context-specific. The meeting also highlighted the importance of the strong commitment and leadership of the national government, especially in the context of transformation of social relations. The meeting, in addition, emphasized the need for capacity-building for women and ensuring its sustainability through adequate funding upon request, in order for women to be integrated into reconciliation processes. It was noted that the Commission has an important role to play in disseminating lessons and translating them into action, through its country-specific engagement, which should serve to sustain attention, mobilize resources and forge coherence in support of national efforts towards achieving gender-responsive reconciliation processes.

III. Conclusions and the agenda going forward

Role of the membership

38. The Commission will continue to enhance the engagement of its membership in support of its work and objectives in the countries in its agenda.

Actions

- Continue to hold periodic informal discussions among the joint members of the three principal organs, with a view to orienting and strengthening the advisory function of the Commission, as related to these organs
- Encourage Member States to voluntarily undertake country-specific and policy-level tasks, as identified by the Organizational Committee and the country configurations, respectively
- Engage Member States from the subregion, regional and subregional organizations more proactively in country-specific discussions and activities, with a view to leveraging their political links and knowledge of the challenges and opportunities for peacebuilding in the countries on the agenda

Relations with principal organs of the United Nations

39. Drawing on the leadership of the joint membership in the three principal organs, the Commission will continue to define and sharpen the nature and scope of its advice and interactions with these organs.

Actions

- General Assembly: initiate informal interaction around a select theme of specific relevance to the Commission, with a view to promoting a peacebuilding perspective in Assembly deliberations and decisions on the political and socioeconomic challenges in post-conflict countries
- Security Council: continue interaction regarding the Commission's engagement with the countries in its agenda, including deliberations on the scope and depth of the Commission's advisory role
- Economic and Social Council: building on the initial work undertaken in 2013, identify and propose practical ways of strengthening the relationship between the Council and the Commission and continue to discuss issues of common interest from the peacebuilding perspective, in such a way as to add value to the work of both bodies

Strategic approach to the core functions of the Commission

40. The Commission will further sharpen its approach to performing its three core functions through its country-specific engagement by focusing on addressing bottlenecks, and on problem-solving, as well as on identifying gaps, opportunities and challenges in the peacebuilding processes in countries in its agenda, with particular emphasis on enhancing national ownership of these processes for greater impact in the field. In this regard, the Commission will also prioritize cross-learning between country configurations.

Actions

- Advocacy and sustained attention: develop country-specific advocacy strategies and identify institutional tools and actions that are linked to key

objectives and/or important milestones envisaged in 2014 in each country in the agenda

- Resource mobilization: identify country-specific actions in support of national resource mobilization strategies, including support to the organization of or follow-up to donor conferences and support to the development of donor coordination and aid management systems, and facilitate national efforts for domestic resource mobilization
- Forging coherence: convene the third dialogue with Executive and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in countries on the agenda, identify country-specific actions for strengthening communications with key regional and international partners to encourage coherent political messages and/or support to critical peacebuilding priorities, and explore further alignment of the Commission's instruments of engagement with ongoing national planning

Working methods

41. The ongoing improvement in the Commission working methods will continue. The Commission will continue to identify and document good practice and address outstanding issues, including by encouraging cross-learning among configurations.

Actions

- Develop a planning and monitoring tool for the agenda going forward, including a quarterly work programme with indicative dates for activities and meetings, with a view to improving the predictability of the Commission calendar
- Convene the first annual session of the Commission in June 2014, in accordance with agreed modalities, as included in the annex to this report

Advance preparations for the 2015 review

42. The next reporting period, from 1 January to 31 December 2014, will mark the end of the second five-year review cycle for the peacebuilding architecture. As mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council in their identical resolutions of 29 October 2010,[5] a further comprehensive review in 2015 will be initiated by both organs. The 2015 review is expected to assess progress made in the implementation of key recommendations emanating from the 2010 review by the Commission and other United Nations actors, and to take stock of remaining challenges. Actions envisaged in the agenda going forward are to be introduced in this context. At the same time, and during the course of 2014, the Commission will identify areas of institutional and policy reforms that can be readily put into practice through country-specific engagement ahead of the 2015 review.

[5] General Assembly resolution 65/7 and Security Council resolution 1947 (2010).

Actions

- Identify lessons learned from country-specific actions and experience under each of the following policy work streams: field orientation, results and impact, and forms of engagement
- Request the Peacebuilding Support Office to consult with the United Nations Senior Peacebuilding Group to identify areas and proposals for developing the contribution of the United Nations system to and its engagement in the 2015 review and brief the Organizational Committee on the results
- Invite the Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration to brief the Organizational Committee on emerging lessons from the support provided to the transition of UNIPSIL and the planned transition of the Commission from Sierra Leone

Annex

Modalities for an annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission

(3 December 2013)

A. Rationale of the annual session

1. In paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 60/180 and of Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), the Assembly and the Council stressed the importance of adopting flexible working methods, including use of videoconferencing, meetings outside of New York and other modalities, in order to provide for the active participation of those most relevant to the deliberations of the Peacebuilding Commission.

2. The 2010 review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/64/868-S/2010/393, annex) concluded that, in order for the Commission to restore the vision and ambition of its founding in 2005, "a new level of attention and resolve on the part of Member States and the top echelons of the Secretariat is required". It also emphasized that the Commission "must bring its political weight to bear in efforts to engage the United Nations system and the wider international community in fulfilling (peacebuilding) priorities in the best possible way".

3. In the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its sixth session (A/67/715-S/2013/63), the Commission noted "that the full potential of the unique membership structure of the Commission and its nature as a political platform made up of the most influential global actors is yet to be realized". The Commission also indicated that the 2010 review had "noted that the lack of strong political support from capitals was one reason for a less effective impact of the Commission in the field".

4. Policymaking and decision-making with respect to the level of commitment and engagement in supporting peacebuilding efforts in the countries on the agenda are normally conducted by the relevant government agencies in the various capitals. Therefore, there is an urgent need to create an opportunity for relevant capital-based senior officials to engage directly in guiding the policy orientation of the Commission, including its country-specific contribution, in the light of implications of peacebuilding agenda-related developments for the work of the Commission.

5. An annual session of the Commission should be designed to help enable closer interaction and engagement among the relevant stakeholders in New York and on the ground, as well as from the capitals of Member States. Such engagement will further strengthen the relevance and coherence of the work of the Commission, thus contributing to enhancing its impact, as the key intergovernmental advisory organ on peacebuilding at the United Nations.

6. The holding of the annual session, as the main substantive and policy guiding forum, will help streamline the Commission working methods by offering an annual broad-based engagement by Member States, countries on the agenda and other stakeholders, both within the United Nations system and outside, in accordance with its founding resolutions. It will further help enhance the predictability of the work programme of the Commission.

7. The convening of the first annual session in 2014 will constitute an important occasion for further leveraging the commitment of Member States, the United Nations system and institutional partners in advance of the 2015 review.

B. Proposed practical modalities

1. Participation

(a) Representatives from members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission;

(b) Representatives from the countries under the consideration of the Commission in accordance with paragraph 7 (a) of the General Assembly and Security Council founding resolutions;

(c) Other representatives whose participation in the work of the Commission, in particular its country-specific configurations, is governed under paragraph 7 (b) to (e) of the General Assembly and Security Council founding resolutions (including field-based United Nations and other operational actors);

(d) A representative of the Secretary-General (para. 8);

(e) Representatives from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other institutional partners (para. 9);

(f) Other regional and local actors (para. 19);

(g) Civil society organizations (para. 21).

The annual session will also be open for attendance by the broader membership of the United Nations.

While the fact that the decision on the level of participation will be made by each Member State is to be taken into account, it is important that due consideration be given in this regard to the need for ensuring substantive discussions and tangible outcomes on the theme/focus of each annual session. Therefore, Member States will strive to ensure participation of capital-based senior officials at the highest possible level, including directors/directors general, State secretaries or ministers, as appropriate. Participation of field-based senior officials is also encouraged.

2. Timing

(a) In order to promote meaningful and sustained engagement of delegations from various capitals, the annual session will be held every year, during the third or fourth week of the month of June around the date of the observance of Peacebuilding Day;[a]

(b) The annual session will be held back to back with the annual Peacebuilding Fund Stakeholders Meeting;

(c) Members of the Security Council that are also members of the Commission are invited to explore the possibility that the annual consideration by

[a] In the declaration entitled "Peacebuilding: the way towards sustainable peace and security", adopted on 25 September 2012, the Heads of State and Government of the members of the Commission affirmed their commitment to commemorate an annual "Peacebuilding Day" on 23 June.

the Council of the annual report of the Commission would take place back to back with the annual session of the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund Stakeholders Meeting.

3. Theme/focus

(a) Informed by the agenda going forward agreed in the annual Commission report, the Organizational Committee will initiate consultations among its members, countries on the agenda and Chairs of the country configurations, no later than the third week of February in each year, in order to consider, identify and select a specific theme that will be the focus at the annual session. The selected theme should meet either one or more of the following criteria:

- Relevance to the country-specific engagement of the Commission (e.g., support to United Nations transitions) and/or peacebuilding priorities (e.g., employment-generation, national reconciliation), with a view to identifying challenges to and opportunities and potential for improving the effectiveness of the Commission
- Focus on a Commission-specific mandate/function (e.g., resource mobilization, improving coherence) requiring policy review with a view to identifying policy recommendations for progressively improving the performance of the Commission in carrying out this mandate/function in country-specific contexts

(b) A concept note and a tentative programme for the annual session must be developed and agreed by the Organizational Committee no later than the third week of March (ahead of the plenary debate on the Commission's annual report) for transmission to national capitals.

4. Structure/programme

a.m.: Opening session: opening remarks by the Chair of the Commission, the Secretary-General/Deputy Secretary-General; remarks by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council

a.m.: Presentation of the theme by an international/regional expert/United Nations system

a.m.: Reflection on the theme by country or countries concerned under the Commission agenda

a.m.: Informal interactive discussion involving Chairs of country-specific configurations, countries on the agenda, Member States (including resident ambassadors) and United Nations field actors, as appropriate

p.m.: Informal interactive discussion on the theme by Member States, the United Nations lead entities, institutional partners, civil society, the private sector, foundations[b]

p.m.: Closing

[b] Any requests for capacity-building assistance from countries concerned as well as expressions of interest in the offer of (capacity-building and technical building) assistance can be made during this segment.

5. Outcome/follow-up

The annual session will result in an outcome capturing and presenting general principles, conclusions and recommendations centred around the selected theme discussed during the annual session. The outcome will be considered and agreed among Member States of the Organizational Committee, as the central organ of the Commission, and reflected in the annual report of the Commission submitted to the General Assembly and the Security Council. The conclusions and recommendations will be utilized to guide relevant Commission country-specific and policy work.

C. Budgetary implications

The annual session will be convened within existing conference services resources available to the work and functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission.

D. Procedure for the formalization of a decision to convene the annual session of the Commission

(a) The report of the Commission on its seventh session of 2013 could reflect a decision by the Organizational Committee to convene an annual session. The report is scheduled for formal adoption by the Committee on 29 January 2014. The present draft non-paper can thus be formatted and then annexed to the draft annual report of the Commission;

(b) As a result, the first annual session could be held at a date to be determined in the third or fourth week of June 2014.

United Nations A/68/730–S/2014/66

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Agenda item 110
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 29 January 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write further to our letters regarding the terrorist activities of organizations associated with Al-Qaida and the support of Saudi Arabia for such activities. On instructions from my Government, I wish to draw your attention to the following information.

In a frantic attempt to undermine a political solution to the crisis in Syria, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has again opted for violence and terrorism to sabotage the Geneva conference. It has sponsored an initiative to bring an end to the infighting between armed terrorist groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Islamic Front, the Army of the Mujahidin, the Nusrah Front and others. It has made every financial, military and logistical effort to unify their ranks against the Syrian State and undermine a political solution to the crisis.

For that purpose, the Saudi Arabian authorities have turned to the Saudi Arabian sheikh Abdullah bin Sulayman al-Muhaysini, one of the religious authorities whom the jihadist groups follow and whose fatwas they consider binding. They have given him the task of launching what he calls the "Umma Initiative" (see annex), which is stated to have been agreed after consultations with the scholars of the Islamic community (umma), including the so-called "wise man of the umma", Ayman al-Zawahiri. It is intended to bring about an immediate ceasefire between the Islamist factions that are in conflict all over Syria. It requests the agreement of the following *takfirist* terrorist groups: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Islamic Front, the Army of the Mujahidin, the Front of Revolutionaries of Syria and the Nusrah Front.

The initiative was planned by the Saudi Arabian authorities. It is underpinned by fatwas and appeals issued by Al-Qaida figures of authority around the world. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has responded to Al-Zawahiri's call for an end to the infighting. The leader of the Nusrah Front, Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, has also expressed his agreement in an audio recording. The Islamic Front and the Army

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of the Mujahidin issued a joint statement on 26 January 2014 (see annex) supporting the so-called Umma Initiative.

The fact that Saudi Arabian sponsorship has gone hand in hand with appeals from the leadership of Al-Qaida shows that the role of Saudi Arabia in Syria and the region has evolved from covert backing to open support for Al-Qaida and associated organizations, whatever their nomenclature. That situation is a flagrant and unprecedented violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1267 (1999), all of which stress the need to refrain from providing any form of support, active or passive, to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts.

In the light of the foregoing, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls for measures to be taken in order for the Security Council committees on counter-terrorism to include the organizations of the Islamic Front and the Army of the Mujahidin on the list of terrorist entities associated with Al-Qaida, alongside Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Nusrah Front, both of which have been added to the lists maintained by the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) on individuals and entities associated with Al-Qaida.

In order to enforce the Security Council resolutions that stress the need for international cooperation and for all forms of action to combat terrorism, the Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council to prevail on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to refrain from providing any form of active or passive support for terrorist activities in Syria, which are carried out by terrorist groups with various names that belong to Al-Qaida. Those groups receive direct and indirect, covert and open support from certain States within and beyond the region, foremost among which is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Failure to confront terrorism, which is developing in Syria, would undermine the current efforts to find a political solution in Geneva. It would allow terrorism to spread to other States, particularly the neighbouring States that shelter and train terrorists before smuggling them into Syria illegally through their territory.

Attached herewith are a copy of the declaration known as the Umma Initiative, which is referred to above, and a document signed by the terrorist Islamic Front and Army of the Mujahidin, in which both groups express support for the initiative.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 110, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mazen **Adi**
Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex to the identical letters dated 29 January 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Praise be to God, who has said, "But no, by thy Lord! They will not believe till they make thee judge regarding the disagreement between them, then they shall find in themselves no impediment touching thy verdict, but shall surrender in full submission" (Koran 4:65).

May praise and peace be upon the Messenger of God and his companions and family.

The Islamic community (umma) is currently going through a tense time. The current jihad in the Levant has reached a perilous crossroads. If conciliators do not press for our voice to be unified and our differences bridged, jihad in the Levant will enter a dark night of blood and conflict whose end would be known only to God.

Our Prophet (peace be upon him) has left us a bright path whose day is like its night, and anyone who leaves it is doomed. God has made it clear what path the believers should follow when conflict arises: they should turn to His book and the practice of His Messenger (peace be upon him). God Almighty has said: "But no, by thy Lord! They will not believe till they make thee judge regarding the disagreement between them, then they shall find in themselves no impediment touching thy verdict, but shall surrender in full submission".

Today, the umma needs its scholars to set forth the position of the sharia regarding the conflict in the Levant. That position consists of referring to God's law without caveat or condition, as a gathering of scholars has said.

Commenting on the holy verse "If two parties of the believers fight, put things right between them" (Koran 49:9), the book *In the Shade of the Koran* says, "The Koran enjoins those believers who do not belong to one of the two fighting parties to reconcile them. If one of the parties refuses to reconcile or accept God's decree on the issues of contention, the believers must fight them until they return to God's decree ".

In order to determine who is the oppressor and who the victim, the matter must be referred to the law of God Almighty.

Today, I have met with all of the parties to the conflict. I found some convergence in their points of view, and all agreed on the need to refer to God's law.

The present initiative, which is to be known as the Umma Initiative, is intended to fill out the details.

We have consulted with the scholars of the umma in the East and West, that God may allow the Initiative to save the blood of the monotheists and enable them to speak with one voice.

We were pleased and, with God's permission, took it as a good sign that the wise man of the umma, the sheikh and jihadist Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, expressed himself early this morning and made the same point that we had intended to make. It

seems as though God was giving a sign that the initiative would come to a good conclusion.

The points of the Umma Initiative are as follows:

1. An immediate ceasefire shall apply across the Levant.

2. A sharia court shall be formed comprising independent judges acceptable to all parties.

3. All of the battalions active in the battlefield that sign this Initiative shall guarantee that the decision of the sharia court is carried out.

4. Your brethren in the centre for jihad advocacy shall nominate ten sharia experts belonging to the factions that have stood aside in the current strife, such as the Hawks of Glory, the Green Battalion and the Army of Al-Aqsa Battalions and others, all of whom we consider to be jihadists whose beliefs are sound. The names shall be submitted to each of the factions in conflict so that they can choose the greatest possible number that they find acceptable, explaining why they have rejected the other names.

If no agreement can be reached on the names, the negotiators shall nominate others. The battlefield of the Levant will not be empty of competent scholars and students, whether emigrants or local supporters.

We believe that the mechanism is necessary. Otherwise, a considerable time will pass before there is any agreement on arbitrators.

5. Within five days from the announcement of the Umma Initiative, parties shall state whether they agree to the arbitration of the sharia court. That period shall begin with the publication of this statement, and shall therefore run from 22 to 26 Rabi' I A.H. 1435.

6. A media centre shall be set up on the social networking sites Twitter and Facebook to announce and report on the outcomes of the arbitration.

7. Each party shall appoint a representative to relay its views and negotiate.

8. The judges shall determine a time period in which to conclude consideration of all of the issues. If any side causes a delay, the judges shall be forced to declare the matter and request those people who are on the side of good to bring that party back to arbitration and reconciliation.

9. We hope that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Islamic Front, the Army of the Mujahidin and the Front of Revolutionaries of Syria will, within the prescribed time period, make statements agreeing to the proceedings. We also hope that the Nusrah Front and the other groups on the battlefield of the Levant will express their position on the Initiative, and that the scholars, mujahidin, writers and journalists of the umma will support it.

Lastly, we urge the umma to stand together, support the Initiative and sign it on the website. We call on the leaders of the mujahidin to place the interests of the umma before those of their groups. To everyone we say: "If you do not do this, there will be strife in the land and great corruption" (Koran 8:73).

If you do not do it, the Levant will enter a lasting conflict whose end is known only to God. If you do not do it, what will become of God's law, for the sake of

which we went into battle? If you do not do it, you will have violated the command of your Lord, who has said: "But no, by thy Lord! They will not believe till they make thee judge regarding the disagreement between them, then they shall find in themselves no impediment touching thy verdict, but shall surrender in full submission".

God prevails in His purpose, but most people know not.

Sheikh Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Sulayman al-Muhaysini
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
23 January 2014, 9.21 a.m.